

VZCZCXRO7799  
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #2360/01 2101519  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 281519Z JUL 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8558  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RHEBAAA/DOE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002360

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/I  
ENERGY FOR ALAN HEGBERG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/2018  
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES ESSENTIAL SERVICES WITH NEW  
SUNNI DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: New Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Rafaie Essawi told the Ambassador and Econ Minister Counselor on July 24 that he "would spare no effort" to improve the delivery of essential services to the Iraqi people, and would make the necessary organizational changes and personal interventions to ensure the people feel the improvements "on the ground." The Ambassador also raised our concerns about possible GOI backsliding on protecting the human rights of prisoners and detainees and stressed our desire to see improved Iraqi financial support of refugees and IDPs. Essawi acknowledged the scale of these problems and said he would forge the necessary inter-ministerial efforts to address them. End summary.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador and Econ Minister Counselor met with new Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Rafaie Essawi (Iraqi Accordance Front/Tawafuq) on July 24 to discuss his role as PM Maliki's overseer of essential services. Essawi assumed his role on July 22 following the July 19 return of Sunni ministers to the cabinet.

-----  
Delivering Essential Services  
-----

¶3. (C) Acknowledging that "the people are waiting," Essawi said that he hoped to "make a difference on the ground" in service delivery -- and soon. The Ambassador suggested that Sadr City would be a good place to start, and advised that Essawi go and meet with the people there early into his tenure. The Ambassador also encouraged Essawi to see Coalition work in education and other areas, look for ways to connect these efforts with the larger Iraqi development plan, possibly considering which Coalition projects the GOI might like to eventually take over. Essawi agreed that he needed and wanted to "get a clear picture on the ground," and said he would make a visit to Sadr City a top priority. He said he understood that Sadr City residents, while enjoying an increase in economic activity, were not seeing evidence of GOI involvement and this needed to change.

¶4. (C) Essawi argued that in addition to the security environment, corruption, and other challenges, organizational shortcomings have hampered budget execution and overall delivery of essential services. To help remedy this, Essawi is developing a plan to enhance inter-ministerial and GOI-provincial cooperation by creating sectoral teams in education, electricity, health, etc., as well as a new Office for Provincial Services. Essawi said he will support this linkage through visits to the provinces and direct engagement with provincial leadership. These visits and the Office of Provincial Services will then be able to task the inter-ministerial teams and monitor progress, a departure

from the current structure whereby the GOI merely reacts to the petitions of individual ministries.

15. (C) On electricity provision, Econ Minister Counselor said that developing a maintenance culture is essential for increasing the sector's performance, and noted that the power plants covered by coalition operations maintenance contracts enjoyed 30 percent higher performance than comparable plants without such support. Econ Minister Counselor advised that the U.S. would like to have the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity take over the contracts upon the termination of U.S. funding in September 2008. Essawi said he enjoyed a good relationship with Minister of Electricity Dr. Karim Wahid and would work with him on the issue. Econ Minister Counselor also raised the issue of the transfer of large reconstruction project assets and briefed the DPM on the challenges facing the Nassiriyah water project and Fallujah sewerage project. Essawi said he would "spare no effort" to understand the projects and asked his staff to arrange for immediate meetings with the mayors of Nassiriyah and Fallujah.

-----  
Human Rights of Prisoners and Detainees  
-----

16. (C) Noting the progress made last year, the Ambassador raised our increasing concern over GOI backsliding on the treatment of prisoners and detainees. He emphasized that for the new Iraq to achieve what we all wish it to achieve, respect for basic human rights is essential. Essawi said "the issue rests with me" and that he is committed to working with the ministries of justice, interior and human rights to

BAGHDAD 00002360 002 OF 002

address it. "I know very well that this is a huge problem," he said, and added that the GOI is formulating a national plan to deal with it. The Ambassador said that while a national plan is a good first step, implementation of that plan will be the key.

-----  
Refugees and IDPs  
-----

17. (C) Calling GOI support thus far for Iraqi refugees a "shame," Essawi said the GOI was greatly concerned for the welfare of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Ambassador said that the issue was of great concern to Iraq's friends as well, and stressed that Iraq needs to find a way to provide more financial support to refugees living in neighboring states while they await repatriation. Noting that while the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) had made significant efforts, Essawi said the MoDM did not have the resources necessary to tackle the issue. He said the problem required the close coordination among the ministries of defense, finance, health, and others, and he was forming a committee charged with directing that support.  
CROCKER